

LAND USE PLAN DESIGNATIONS

This Plan illustrates the preferred future growth and development vision for Frederick County through the creation of a Land Use Plan Map. This map depicts the broad pattern of land uses, community growth area boundaries, transportation networks, community facilities, and green infrastructure that have previously been identified as part of the region plans. Described here are the Land Use Plan designations that are illustrated on the Land Use Plan map with references to the intent of those designations, their relative land use intensity or density, their general placement guidelines, and the zoning districts that would be applied to each designation in order to implement the County's land use policies.

AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DESIGNATIONS

Natural Resource

This designation renames what has previously been called Resource Conservation. The purpose of the Natural Resource designation is to identify significant natural resource features to provide guidance for the application of the Resource Conservation Zoning District and other resource protection strategies. The Natural Resource areas would also support the delineation of natural boundaries for community growth areas and to identify potential greenway linkages within and between community growth areas. The primary features designated Natural Resource include mountain areas and the extent of contiguous forest, major streams defined by the County's 20 sub watersheds, and the State's Green Infrastructure features.

The corresponding zoning districts include Agricultural (A) and Resource Conservation (RC). The RC zone does permit all agricultural activities in addition to limited residential subdivision based on a 10-acre minimum lot size. Since many other protection measures are applied to features such as stream corridors it is not necessary to apply the RC zoning district to all properties designated Natural Resource.

Public Parkland/Open Space

This designation is applied to lands primarily under public ownership for local, state, or federal parklands. It is also applied to publicly owned open space lands devoted to watersheds that protect public water supplies. It may also be applied to large property holdings under private ownership, which have some degree of protection from development. The corresponding zoning districts may include Resource Conservation and Agricultural and various residential zoning districts. A current draft zoning text amendment, would also correspond to a new Open Space Recreation zoning designation being considered.

Agricultural/Rural

This designation is applied to areas outside of the Community Growth Area's (CGA's) that may include active farmland, fallow lands, and residential lots and subdivisions that have been developed under the Agricultural zone. As a development staging mechanism the Agricultural/Rural designation is also applied to land within a CGA to indicate future development potential generally beyond the 20-year time frame of the Plan. These areas would be described as Future Growth Areas.

The corresponding zoning district is Agricultural (A). In addition to permitting agricultural activities the Agriculture zoning district does permit limited residential subdivision for original tracts that existed as of August 18, 1976. Original tracts may be subdivided into three (3) lots plus a remainder with a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet. Additional cluster rights are available for original tracts greater than 25 acres permitting an additional right for every 50 acres.

Rural Community

This designation recognizes existing rural communities that have historically developed as cross road communities with an identifiable concentration of residences and in some cases still support commercial uses. Their designation as a Rural Community serves to maintain the rural and historical character and permits some limited infill development that would rely on individual well/septic systems. The corresponding zoning districts include R-1 Low Density Residential and Village Center (VC).

Rural Residential

The intent of a Rural Residential designation is to recognize areas of existing major residential subdivisions on well/septic, which are zoned Agricultural and R-1 (1 dwelling/acre) outside of Community Growth Areas. This designation is applied to what have previously been designated Rural Subdivision and Rural Neighborhood. Rural Residential areas are not intended to be served by public water/sewer and should only allow for continued build-out and infill of the existing lots/subdivisions and should not be expanded into surrounding agricultural properties. The corresponding zoning districts would be R-1 and Agricultural.

RESIDENTIAL DESIGNATIONS

Low Density Residential

This designation is only applied within Community Growth Areas (CGA) and where public water/sewer is available or planned. The density range will be 3 – 6 dwellings(du)/acre to better support smart growth policies. This designation may be applied to older developments within a CGA that may still be relying on individual well/septic systems.

The corresponding zoning districts that can be applied include R-3, R-5 and PUD. The R-3 district permits single-family detached dwellings at a density of 3 du/acre with public water/sewer. The R-5 district permits single-family detached, duplexes, and townhouses at a density of 5 du/acre. The Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning district is a floating zone that can only be applied to properties designated for residential. While the gross density of the PUD developments are typically in the 3-4 du/acre range, because the PUD district permits townhouse and multi-family dwellings the net densities are generally much higher.

Medium Density Residential

This designation has a density range of 6 – 10 dwellings/acre with public water/sewer. This designation would serve to accommodate attached dwellings such as townhouses and also serves as an underlying plan designation for PUD zoning.

The corresponding zoning districts include R-8 and PUD. The R-8 zoning district permits all dwelling types, with smaller minimum lot sizes than the R-5 district. The PUD floating zone could also be applied to this designation allowing a gross density of 6 – 10 dwellings/acre and a mix of dwelling types.

High Density Residential

The intent of this designation is to provide for multi-family housing and to encourage opportunities for moderate priced housing. The density range is >10 dwellings/acre. Within the County this designation has only been applied to properties in the Ballenger Creek community growth area. Corresponding zoning districts include R-12, R-16, and PUD.

MIXED USE DESIGNATIONS

Mixed Use Development

This new land use category is intended to facilitate redevelopment and transit oriented design (TOD) opportunities in existing developed areas adjoining underutilized malls, industrial or commercial areas or office parks, and vacant or underutilized commercial/employment corridors. In particular this designation would support mixed use developments, which include residential, commercial, office/employment, and institutional uses. For residential uses this Plan would support medium to high densities especially with TOD projects. The uses may be integrated both; vertically (different uses within the same building) and horizontally, on the same property and/or within the same project limits. The extent to which the amount of residential development is required versus permissible on a particular parcel will be identified at the time of corridor and community plan reviews. Application of the mixed-use designation is not intended for general application throughout the county and should be carefully considered.

The implementation of the mixed use land use designation may be through a mixed use euclidean zone, or through the application of a revised mixed use floating zone. The creation of a mixed-use euclidean zone and amendments to the current mixed-use (MXD) floating zone provisions are needed to allow for the zoning changes to be put into effect.

Village Center

The intent of the Village Center designation is to accommodate a mix of low intensity commercial uses and residential uses within existing communities. The Village Center designation has a broad application to both community growth areas where public water/sewer is available and to Rural Communities that rely on individual well/septic systems. Its application to the “Main Streets” of smaller Community Growth Areas, which have historically developed with a mix of residential and commercial uses, would continue to support appropriate mixed uses. Residential development could be developed at densities up to 7 dwellings/acre. Within Rural Communities residential densities would still be limited to 1 dwelling/acre based on well/septic restrictions. The corresponding zoning district is Village Center (VC), which has application in both Rural Communities that rely on well/septic and in Community Growth Areas where public water and sewer is available.

COMMERCIAL AND EMPLOYMENT DESIGNATIONS

General Commercial

The General Commercial designation provides for general retail, small-scale office, business/personal service uses, and highway services. This Plan recommends focusing General Commercial uses within Community Growth Areas with the exception of existing, isolated commercial uses. The General Commercial designation is also applied to properties previously designated either Commercial Rural or Highway Service where there are existing commercial uses or if commercial use would be appropriate on undeveloped parcels. The corresponding zoning district is General Commercial (GC).

Though not designated as such, commercial land uses may also be located within Planned Unit Developments (PUD's), which are designated Low Density Residential; within Mixed Use Developments (MXD's) which may be designated Office/Research/Industrial or Limited Industrial and within Village Center (VC) zoned properties.

Office/Research

The intent of this designation is to support business, professional and corporate office uses as well as research and development uses. The Office/Research designation is primarily applied on properties that have visibility from interstate highways and are in close proximity to interstate highway interchanges.

The corresponding zoning district is Office/Research/Industrial (ORI). This designation would also be eligible for the Mixed Use Development (MXD) floating zone, which would allow for a mix of employment, commercial, and residential uses in an integrated development. The predominant use of an MXD development would still be employment with the current zoning ordinance regulations limiting residential uses to 25% of the gross acreage, commercial uses to 45% of the gross acreage (without a residential component) or with a combined residential and commercial components together could not exceed 40% of the gross acreage.

Limited Industrial

This designation provides opportunities for warehousing, wholesaling, limited manufacturing uses in addition to corporate office and research/development uses. The predominant application of this designation is within Community Growth Areas or Employment Areas, where public water/sewer is available. This designation is also applied to areas outside of a Community Growth Area with a reliance on well/septic systems. These areas should have close access to the arterial highway network though they don't necessarily need to have visibility from the interstate highways. The corresponding zoning district is Limited Industrial (LI). Current zoning ordinance regulations permit this designation to be eligible for the Mixed Use Development (MXD) floating zone with the same residential and commercial use limitations as described under the Office/Research designation.

General Industrial

This designation supports heavy industrial and manufacturing uses in addition to uses typical in Limited Industrial developments. Due to the potential intensity of uses they should generally be segregated and appropriately buffered from residential uses. The corresponding zoning district is General Industrial (GI). The GI district does permit mineral mining activities as well.

Mineral Mining

This designation is primarily applied to areas under active mining operations and more recently has been applied to areas where future mining and associated activities may occur. The corresponding zoning district is Mineral Mining (MM), which is a floating zone that can only be applied as a piecemeal rezoning process. This zoning district also permits associated processing uses related to the mining such as asphalt plants and concrete block manufacturing. Several existing mining operations are zoned GI.

OTHER DESIGNATIONS

Institutional

The purpose of the Institutional designation is to recognize public and governmental uses such as schools, libraries, public safety facilities, and water/sewer facilities. The designation is applied to properties owned either by the County or the Board of Education even if the properties are not developed. The Institutional designation is also applied to both private and governmental institutional uses such as Mt. St. Mary's University, the State's Victor Cullen Center, and the Daughters of Charity complex in Emmitsburg. The designation is also applied to private elementary and secondary schools. The corresponding zoning is primarily Agricultural though many school sites are zoned PUD. A current draft zoning text amendment, would also correspond to a new Institutional zoning designation being considered.